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MUSIC NEWS 06/27/2016

Google Licenses LyricFind for Search Results

Lyrics have increased in popularity, and will be increasing songwriters' bottom lines too -- according to LyricFind's co-founder.

BY ALEX PHAM



Ray Laskowitz/Getty Images


Starting today, music publishers and songwriters will have a brand new source of revenue.

Google has signed a multi-year licensing deal with Toronto-based LyricFind to display song lyrics in its search results, both companies announced today. A query for the lyrics to a specific song will pull up the words to much of that song, freeing users from having to click through to another website. Google rolled out the lyrics feature in the U.S. today (June 27), though it has licenses

to display the lyrics internationally as well.

(Disclosure: Billboard operates [a chart](#) powered by LyricFind.)

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While the terms of the deal weren't disclosed, LyricFinder Chief Executive and co-founder Darryl Ballantyne projects publishers and songwriters seeing "millions" of dollars in additional revenue from this arrangement.

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"It should be a significant revenue stream," Ballantyne said. "I can't get into the rates, but we expect it to be millions of dollars generated for publishers and songwriters as a result of this. It's all based on usage. Royalties are paid based on the number of times a lyric is viewed. The more it's viewed, the more publishers get paid."

For Google, the arrangement is designed to capture the significant amount of traffic around lyrics — and subsequently funnel them towards its Google Play Music services. (To see the full song lyrics, Google invites searchers to a page promoting its free radio and paid on-demand services.) Google has been steadily adding more information about music directly on its search results page, pulling snippets from Wikipedia and elsewhere about albums, artists and songs on the top and right hand side of its search results pages.

Informally, sites that post lyrics have operated under the radar for years, generating untold advertising revenue from billions of searches. While some have licenses to display the lyrics, many do not.

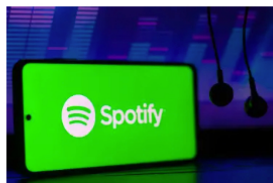
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LyricFind was among the first companies to see an opportunity in legitimizing and monetizing uses of online lyrics. Founded in 2004, the company began by recruiting publishers and then persuading sites to pay up. Today, the company manages the rights to lyrics from more than 4,000 publishers, licensing to online services and sites across 100 countries. LyricFind expects to expand its service to 200 countries over the next year, Ballantyne projects. Among its licensees are Deezer and Amazon, which displays lyrics that are synchronized to songs as they play. The popularity of lyrics has helped LyricFind double its revenue over the past two years, Ballantyne said.

This is potentially bad news for licensed lyric sites such as AZLyrics.com, which has long dominated search results, and the unlicensed sites as well. With viewers able to see much of a given song's lyrics immediately, click-through rates to these sites are likely to decline.

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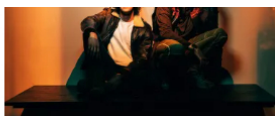
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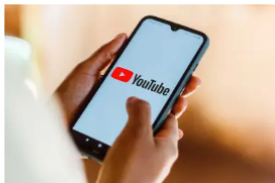
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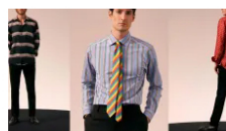
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